

REMARKS

Claims 22, 24-30 and 48-54 are now pending and stand rejected in the application. With this amendment, claim 22 is amended. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 22, 24-30, and 48-54 remain pending.

Support for the amendment to claim 22 is found in the specification as originally filed, for example in paragraph [0029]. Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments.

CONSIDERATION AFTER A FINAL REJECTION

Entry of the amendments and consideration of the remarks after a Final Rejection are proper because the remarks and amendments put the claims in an allowable condition and require no further examination. Further and favorable consideration is solicited.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 22, 24-30, and 49-54 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as failing to comply with the written description requirements. The claims have been amended to remove the recitation of “a unitary” expendable layer. On this basis, Applicants respectfully request the § 112 rejection be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 22, 24-26, 28-30, 48, and 50-53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Takahira reference (U.S. Pat. No. 6,394,360) in view of the Gerard reference (U.S. Pat. No. 5,929,167). By reciting that the expendable layer A is made of a single material (whether it is a single layer or multiple layers), the amended claims distinguish over the structure relied on by the Examiner from the Takahira reference. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections as applied to the amended claims and request reconsideration.

Applicants have amended claim 22 to recite that the expendable polymeric layer A is either extruded as a single layer, or if A consists of more than one layer, the layers are extruded as adjacent layers made of the same material. Figure 2 of the Takahira reference is reproduced here for convenience:

Fig. 2

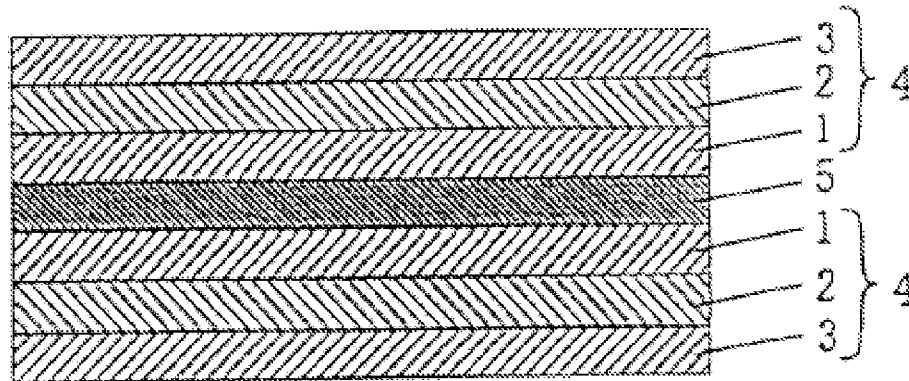


Figure 2 of the reference shows release liners 4 on a pressure sensitivity adhesive layer 5, where each release liner 4 is made up in turn of three separate layers 1, 2, and 3.

The structure recited in amended claim 22 is different from that of the Takahira reference. In the Takahira reference, the layers of the release liner, corresponding to expendable layer A of the claims, are all different. By contrast, in the amended claims, the expendable layer A is either a single layer or consists of multiple layers all extruded from the same material. This structure is not disclosed or suggested in the combination of the Takahira and Gerard references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 25, 49, and 54 stand rejected as obvious over the Takahira reference in view of the Gerard reference as applied to claims 22, 26, and 22, and in further view of the Caldwell reference (U.S. Pat. No. 3,581,884). The deficiencies of the combined Takahira and Gerard references are discussed above as applied to the amended claims. The Caldwell reference does not make up for those deficiencies. Applicants respectfully request the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 27 stands rejected as obvious over the combined Takahira and Gerard references, and further in view of the Schacht reference. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,096,777). The Schacht reference does not make up for the deficiencies of the combined Takahira and Gerard references as applied to the amended claims. Applicants respectfully request the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, Applicants believe that claims 22, 24-30, and 48-54 are in an allowable condition and respectfully request an early Notice of Allowance. In the alternative, Applicants respectfully request an Advisory Action stating whether the amendments can be entered and/or the remarks considered at this time after final. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if that would be helpful to resolving any issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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